



BERT APERLOO

SILVER

Element Symbol: **Ag**
Atomic Number: **47**

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The chemical symbol of Silver is Ag, which stands for Argentum in Latin. Silver is a lustrous white metal and was named from the Anglo-Saxon word “seofler”. Like gold, silver is a prized metal, both for its beauty and usefulness!

Silver has been known since ancient times and has been used for thousands of years to make coins (as early 700 BC by the Lydians), ornaments and jewellery. It has provided riches for many a civilization, including the ancient Greeks, the Romans, and other earlier civilisations. Silver by-products have been found in parts of the world which indicate that silver was being separated from lead as early as the 4th millennium BCE.

As Silver was one of the earliest metals used to make coins, many of us still associate Silver's use to produce currency. Today, only Mexico has any silver in its coins. For Australia, our last coin to contain silver was the 1966 fifty-cent piece. Other uses include dental alloys, optics, solder and brazing alloys, electrical contacts and batteries, paints, developing film for graphs, movies and television and to make mirrors, as it is the best reflector of visible light known.

Silver is found in mines primarily in Canada, Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, the United States and Australia. Australia ranks in the top six silver producers in the world. Silver plays an important part in Australia's history, as the first mine developed was a silver-lead mine in South Australia. Today, Mt Isa is the largest silver producer in Australia.

Silver not only has its influence in science but it is also connected to religion. It is often associated with the moon and lunar influence. An early Latin name for this mineral was Luna which means moon, an allusion to its striking, bright luster.

Provided by the element sponsor sponsor Kathi Marshall

ARTISTS DESCRIPTION

Silver is often found with other metals, so I used screen printing, as it lends itself to multiple layering of colours. The image is inspired by the use of silver in the key mechanisms of woodwind instruments. As well as silver I have also used a gold colour, as silver is found in its native form as an alloy of gold. The metallic blue colour I used for the element symbol and atomic number is inspired by colloidal silver, which leads to blue pigmentation when there is an excess of silver in the body.

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